

The University of Alberta Middle Eastern and North African Music Ensemble

directed by Michael Frishkopf

with special guests

The Najva Persian Music Ensemble

present

a spring concert

Thursday, March 26, 2009, at 7:00 PM

Convocation Hall, University of Alberta

Program

Bilafrah (In celebration). Lebanon. *Maqam Hijaz G*. Composed by Assi Rahbani (1923-1986) and Mansur Rahbani (1925-2009), arr. Ziad Rahbani (b. 1956). This instrumental piece is drawn from the Rahbani brothers' musical play *Nass Men Warak* (People of Paper), featuring Lebanese diva Fairouz (b. 1935). The musical is one of many collaborations between the brothers and Fairouz. Assi Rahbani married Fairouz; their son Ziad Rahbani, who has also composed extensively for his mother, works at the vanguard of the Arab contemporary music scene today.

Dulab Nahawand. Arab *mashriq* (Egypt and Levant). *Maqam Nahawand*. Trad. The *dulab* is a short instrumental piece, commonly performed in the art music tradition of the Arab *mashriq*. Each *dulab* establishes a particular melodic mode (*maqam*), in anticipation of a substantial vocal piece. This particular *dulab* introduces *maqam nahawand*, similar to the Western minor scale. Other *maqamat* feature microtones, half-flats and half-sharps located between pitches available on a piano.

Taqsim Nahawand. *Maqam Nahawand*. Solo: Nadir Bellahmer, *kamanja* (violin). A *taqsim* is a modal improvisation, the musical form best suited to expressing the subtle essence of the *maqam*. The Western violin has been used in the Middle East since the 19th century. As it replaced local bowed fiddles, it subsumed the name of one of them: *kamanja* (*kemence*).

Sa'altak Habibi (I asked you, my dear). Lebanon. *Maqam Nahawand*. Solo: Mona Shubeita, Tony Abinader. This delicate love song was composed by the Rahbani brothers for their musical play *Mais el-Reem* (The Deer's Meadow), in 1975.

Taqsim Nahawand to Rast. Solo: Aws Alshamsan. Modal improvisation transitioning from *maqam nahawand* to *maqam rast*. The *oud*, an unfretted lute common throughout the Middle East and North Africa, is central to traditional Arab song composition and performance. Fret-free, the *oud* (unlike its derivative, the European lute) is capable of infinite microtonal shadings.

Dulab Rast. *Maqam Rast*. Arab trad. This *dulab*, using the same melodic contours as the previous, introduces *maqam rast*, whose pitch set comprises a major scale in which the 3rd and 7th scale degrees have been half-flatted.

La Khabar (No news). Iraq. *Maqam Rast*. Composition by Husayn al-Saadi; text by Tariq Yassin. Featuring: Amal Al-Kheder, David Stark, Rana El Kadi, Tony Abinader. Performed by the acclaimed Iraqi singer Dr. Fathil Awwad, this song became extraordinarily popular in the late 1960s, and was later performed by other singers around the Arab world. The poem expresses a man's sadness after his lover's marriage, while simultaneously evoking the joy of the wedding itself. Dr. Awwad taught at Baghdad University's college of fine arts. After living in Libya he returned to Baghdad in 2005.

Bidad-e Zaman (The injustice of time). Iran. *Dastgah Isfahan*. Composed by Parviz Yahaghi (1936-2007), text by Bijan Taraghi. Solo: Elaheh Ahmadi. Bidad-e Zaman is a Persian *tasnif* (precomposed song) popularized by the acclaimed Iranian singer Marzieh (b. 1926, Tehran). Known as the first lady of Persian music, Marzieh has touched the hearts of millions of people through her enormous vocal repertoire. She sang Bidad-e Zaman in the late 70s, and it became one of her most popular songs. Parviz Yahaghi was a distinguished Iranian composer and violinist, who lived in Tehran. In the 1960s and 1970s Yahaghi composed hundreds of pieces, both for violin and for celebrated Iranian singers such as Banan, Diva Marzieh, Delkash, Pouran, Elaheh, and Dariush Rafei. As a

violinist, his creative performance style has influenced nearly all Iranian violinists of his time. *Dastgah* is a modal structure of Persian art music, comparable to Arabic *maqam* (or Turkish *makam*).

Chang-e Rudaki (Rudaki's harp). Iran. *Dastgah Bayât Esfahân*. Composed by Ruhollah Khâleghi (1906-1965), text by Rudaki (858-945). Solo: Kioumars Poorhaydari, Yuliya Martishuk. Another Persian *tasnif*. Rudaki, considered one of the founders of literature in modern Persian, wrote this poem for the Amir (Prince) Nasr-Ebn Ahmad Samani. The Amir was sojourning in Harat, and had no intention of returning to Bokhara, his home. His courtiers missed their families, so they asked the poet to write verses evoking homesickness in the Amir's heart, thus making him return to Bokhara. Even before Rudaki finished singing the poem, the Amir had mounted his horse to return home.

Avaz in Bayât Esfahân. Iran. *Dastgah Esfahân*. Composed by Mohammad-Reza Shajarian (b. 1940) and Javad Ma'rufi (1912-1993); text by Hafez (1315-1390). Performed by members of the Najva Persian Music Ensemble: Ali Hooshir (voice) and Raman Yazdani (piano). *Avaz* (literally "vocal") is the improvised non-metric singing of Persian art music, usually accompanied by one instrument. This piece, an *avaz* in the mode Bayât-e Esfahân, was originally performed by Mohammad-Reza Shajarian and Javad Ma'rufi on a poem of Hafez, the most celebrated of all Persian poets.

Shâneh (Comb). Iran. Text by Nasser Rastgar-nejad; set to an Arab melody by Abbas Shapouri (1923-?). Shâneh, also known as "kamtar zan Shâneh" ("comb less"), is an Iranian popular song, said to be inspired by an Arabic melody. It is one of many duets that the legendary Pooran (Farahdokht Abbas Taleghani, married to Abbas Shapouri) and Vigen (Vigen Derderian, 1929-2003, known as "Sultan of Pop," a hugely popular Armenian-Iranian pop music singer) sang together. Different from Iranian classical music, Shâneh exemplifies Iranian pop songs from the 1950s to 70s, composed for the new youth market of that era. The song cries: "My love! Comb your hair less, as my heart has nested in its curls and waves. You will injure my heart if you keep combing your hair."

al-'Uzubiyya (Bachelorhood). Arab *mashriq* (Egypt and Levant). *Maqam Nahawand*. trad. Solo: Ashraf El-Assaly. This melody, simple yet powerful, is typical of the Syrian *qadd* tradition, and appears to be the source for Shâneh.

Ahabbek Law Tekun Hader, Ahabbek Law Tekun Hajer (I love you whether you're here or away). Saudi Arabia. *Maqam Bayyati*. Composed by Talal Maddah (1939-2000), text by Lutfi Zayni (1939-2001). Solo: Mona Shubeita and Samira ElAtia. This song was composed and popularized by the celebrated Saudi singer, musician and composer Talal Maddah, known as *Qitharat al-Sharq* (Lyre of the East) and (later) as *Sawt al-Ard* (Voice of the Earth). Poet Lutfi Zayni, also the first actor to appear on Saudi television, was known as the "complete artist." *Maqam bayyati* contains a half-flatted second scale degree.

Taqsim Huzam. *Maqam Huzam*. Solo oud: Aws Alshamsan. *Maqam huzam* is distinctive for its half-flatted tonic! The same mode is featured in the following two pieces.

Dulab Huzam. *Maqam Huzam*. Arab trad. Another *dulab*, helping to establish *huzam*.

Raqs al-Hawanem (Dance of the ladies). Egypt. *Maqam Huzam*. Trad. Solos: Pamela Cruise (dancer), Cari Friesen (dancer), Ashraf El-Assaly (*oud*), Rick Mattar (*tabla*, goblet-shaped drum). A traditional Egyptian melody, accompanying the *raqs sharqi* (eastern dance), typical of Egypt and widely known throughout the region.

I n t e r m i s s i o n

Dulab Rast. *Maqam Rast*. Trad.

Ya Shadi al-Alhan (Oh singer of songs). Egypt. *Maqam Rast*. Composed by Sayyid Darwish (1892-1923) on an old text. Solos: Rana El Kadi and Tony Abinader. A famous *muwashshah* (classical Arabic strophic poem) by Egypt's seminal composer of the early 20th century. We perform this beloved song to the accompaniment of a traditional 14-beat *darb* (metric cycle), known as *muhajjar* ("rocky").

Longa Riyad. Egypt. *Maqam Nahawand* in G (Farahfaza). Composed by Riyad al-Sunbati (1906-1981). Featuring Aws Alshamsan, Nadir Bellahmer, Niyati Dhokai, Peeware Sapsuwan, Steven Byrne, Martha Steenstrup, and Michael Frishkopf. The *longa* is an Ottoman instrumental form, in which multiple melodies (usually in different

maqamat) alternate with a melodic refrain. This well-known piece was composed by Riyad al-Sunbati, one of Egypt's greatest composers of the mid-20th century, as well as an *oud* virtuoso.

Il Hilwa Di (This beautiful girl). Egypt. *Maqam Hijaz* (ending in *Bayyati*). Composed by Sayyid Darwish (1892-1923). Featuring Ashraf El-Assaly and Samira ElAtia. "This beautiful girl arose early to bake, as the rooster crowed *kuku* at dawn." In this song, one of his most popular, Darwish portrays an early morning Egyptian scene, as people awaken and get to work, commenting on their hardship and endurance. Sayyid Darwish was an innovator in social realism; many of his songs speak of ordinary, everyday life.

Leylim Ley. Turkey. *Makam Kurd*. Composed by Zulfu Livaneli (b. 1946). Featuring: Samira ElAtia, Amal Al-Kheder, Elaheh Ahmadi. *Taqasim* by Aws Alshamsan, Michael Frishkopf. "Thinking of the spring of my life turning into autumn, I'm destroyed and shattered, staying up all night." Leylim Ley is a Turkish folk song of love and nostalgia from the 1970s, associated with the popular singer Ibrahim Tatlis. The composer is a well-known folk musician, novelist, columnist, and one-time politician.

Wahrane Wahrane (Oran Oran). Algeria. *Maqam hijaz* on C. Lyrics and music by the French-Algerian composer and performer Ahmed Wahby (1921-1993). Solo *oud* taqsim: Aws Alshamsan. *Wahrane* (Oran) is a city in western Algeria, and home to many of the greatest exponents of *rai* music. Starting in the 1960s, *rai* (literally "opinion"), drawing on 1930s roots in urban folk music, modernized through fusions with global styles (from rock, blues, and jazz to reggae and rap), and by addressing issues of contemporary concern to the youth, such as sex, drugs, and alcohol. Persecution in Algeria (including the assassination of *rai* star Cheb Hasni) led many *rai* singers to exile in Paris. In the 1990s, Khaled (b. 1960), the "king of *rai*", launched Wahrane to worldwide fame.

A Vava Inouva (Oh my father). Composed by Idir (b. 1949), text by Ben Mohamed. Featuring: Nadir Bellahmer, Ben Ragosin (guitar), Dion Brocks (mandolin). Narratively, this remarkable song, with its folk-guitar style and complex metrical structure, draws upon storytelling traditions of Berber Kabylia, in the Algerian highlands. After its release in 1973 the song became exceedingly popular, not only in Algeria, where it served as an emotional emblem of Berber identity, but throughout Europe as well (and especially in France). The composer, Hamid Cheriet, a.k.a. Idir ("to live"), was born in Aït Lahcène, Algeria. He is considered a global ambassador of Kabyle Berber culture.

Allah ya Moulana (God, oh our Lord). Morocco. Composed by Nass El-Ghiwane (and rearranged by M. Frishkopf). Featuring Samira ElAtia (voice). Violin solo: Nadir Bellahmer. "Morocco's Nass El Ghiwane are legends across North Africa, comparable in status and influence to that of The Rolling Stones on rock music." (BBC Radio, 2008) Formed in 1963, the band (whose name roughly means "new Dervishes") has innovated by incorporating local Moroccan musical traditions. Their performances influenced music across North Africa, including Algerian *rai*. (Martin Scorsese used their song "Ya Sah" for *The Last Temptation Of Christ*.) Our arrangement of this Sufi-inflected song features heavily syncopated bass and percussion, alluding to the distinctive Moroccan musical-spiritual tradition of *Gnawa*.

Oudak Rannan (Your oud resounds). Lebanon. *Maqam Bayyati* in G. Composed by Ziad Rahbani. Solo: Rana El Kadi. Lead dancer: Nizar Ali. A story maintains that this song was composed during Lebanon's sectarian civil war (1975-1990) to honor the guard outside Fairouz' home in Beirut. Fairouz comes from a Christian family. The guard, who was Muslim, used to accompany Fairuz on the *oud*, but later lost his life in armed clashes. The song, which appeared on Fairouz' 2001 album *Maarifiti Feek*, accompanies *dabke*, the traditional line dance of Levantine and Iraqi Arabs. Please join in!

Performers

Ali Shawwa, percussion, voice	Martha Steenstrup, percussion, voice
Ali Hooshlar, voice	Melanie Wiens, percussion, voice
Amal Al-Kheder, voice	Michael Frishkopf, <i>org</i>
Andrew Halladay, <i>daff</i>	Mohamed Salama, <i>oud</i>
Ashraf El-Assaly, voice, <i>oud</i>	Mona Shubeita, voice
Aws Alshamsan, <i>oud</i>	Nadir Bellahmer, <i>kamanja</i> , guitar
Ben Ragosin, <i>oud</i> , guitar	Negin Razavilar, voice
Cari Friesen (TA), clarinet, dance	Niyati Dhokai, <i>kamanja</i>
Catherine Scheelar, <i>sagat</i> , voice	Nizar Ali, percussion, voice
David Stark, voice	Pamela Cruise, voice, <i>sagat</i> , dance
Dion Brocks, electric bass, mandolin	Peeware Sapsuwan, <i>kamanja</i>
Drew Price, <i>kamanja</i>	Priscilla Li, percussion
Elaheh Ahmadi, voice	Raman Yazdani, piano
Elysia Donald, voice	Rana El Kadi, voice
Jacek Sbierraj, <i>kamanja</i>	Rawane Nassif, percussion, voice
Jessica Keyes, <i>nay</i>	Rick Mattar, <i>tabla</i>
Karen Kang, <i>riqq</i> , voice	Samira Elatia, voice
Kioumars Poorhaydari, <i>tonbak</i> , voice	Steven Byrne, <i>tabla</i> , <i>riqq</i>
Leslie Precht, voice, clave, shaker	Tony Abinader, voice
Marjan Mirheydari, voice	Yuliya Martishuk, percussion, voice

Sponsored by the University of Alberta Department of Music, and the Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology.

The Middle Eastern and North African Music Ensemble is a course available for University credit. For more information, contact Michael Frishkopf (michaelf@ualberta.ca), or visit: www.fwalive.ualberta.ca/mediawiki or www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/music/

Upcoming world music concerts in Convocation Hall:

Friday, March 27, 7:30 PM: The Indian Music Ensemble, directed by Sharmila Mathur, presents *Rag Rangoli: Colors of Indian Music*

Saturday, March 28, 8 PM: The West African Music Ensemble, directed by Robert Kpogo, with guests Wajjo African Drummers & Dancers, and Tendai Muparutsa & group